BOOKS ON SOUTH AMERICA

There is a city in which no one is rich or poor

CARTAGENA AND THE BANKS OF THE SINU. By R. B. Cunninghame Graham. George H. Doran Company.

A fierce love for things old and storied and for mouldy cities unfrequented by the generality of human beings has led R. B. Cunninghame Graham to write this volume on Cartagena of Colombia and the Sinu River country.

Regarding his fondness for out of the way places Bernard Shaw tells the following story: "Somebody told him of Tarndant, a city of Morocco, in which no Christian had ever set foot. Concluding at once that it must be a desirable place to live in he took ship and horse, changed hat for turban and made for the sacred city via Mogador. . . . He fell into the hands of the Cadi of Kintafi, who rightly held that there was more danger to Islam in one Cunninghame Graham than in a thousand Christians."

There are few spots in the civilized and uncivilized world which the author of this book has not visited. Spanish America he knows marvellously well, its people, its natural life and its traditions. Little wonder that he has chosen to tell the story of Cartagena, its vivid tropic beauties, which make a wondrous background for the tale of the dashing conquistadors jumping through the jungle in quest of El Dorado. His labors as a historian are ended when he has told the story of the conquerors, for the period when they held sway is most interesting and dearest to the heart of this Scotch laird, who is himself a conquistador gone astray in the twentieth century.

Graham is both a solitary and a romantic, mingling with the crowds. He has the build and mien of Don Quixote; very appropriate, too, for a man who loves the Spanish tongue and is always charging at evil. One critic sees in him the literary and physical reincarnation of Sir Philip Sidney, the gallant Elizabethan sonneteer. Another has called him the Scotch Maupassant. Bernard Shaw regrets that he is an unashamed dandy; such boots and such a hat would have dazzled D'Orsay," but he carries his unconventional costumes off in magnificent style—nobody thinks them extraordinary.

Less than half a century after Columbus discovered his continent the blood and orange banner of Spain was hanging listlessly on its staff before the hut of Don Pedro de Heredia, founder of Cartagena. In 1533 Don Pedro forced the inhabitants of the city and of the surrounding country to submit.

Don Pedro spent his days building up Cartagena and seeking and finding treasure in the jungles. In one spot alone he unearthed more treasure than ever fell to the lot of either Cortes or Pizarro. In fact, it is believed that the gold discovered not far from the banks of the Sinu sent other Spaniards down into Peru and resulted in the vanquishment of the Incas and other Peruvian tribes. Never were there such treasure hunters as these early Spaniards. Worn to the skin and bones by disease and hunger, an Indian yarn of treasure was sufficient to turn them from their homeward path toward new sallies in fever ridden morasses and into flights of poisoned arrows.

One-fifth of all the treasure went overseas to the King of Spain; the remainder was divided among the members of the expedition and went toward the improvement of the city. The silver galleons from other parts of Spanish America gathered in the fine land locked harbor of the city before setting out for Spain. The rumor of treasure carried like the stench of carrion to the buccaneers of the day. "Hawkins and Frobisher must often have seen its walls, the tops of the white houses, and the palm trees, as they lay outside the Boca Grande, waiting for chance galleons," writes Graham. In 1584 Sir Francis Drake reduced the town to ashes and set sail for England after pillaging the town. A Frenchman several years later again burned the city to the ground. But Cartagena, phœnixlike, always rose from the ashes, a more beautiful and more substantial city than before.

To defend the city against attack and from invasion from corsairs heavy walls were built, so wide that four teams may drive abreast in comfort upon them. "Cartagena does not found her charm on mere natural advantages although these are great," declares the writer, "but upon history and tradition and on the incomparable picturesqueness of the town and its monumental walls. Built of the finest masonry and thirty feet in height, they ring the city round, giving it an air of Avila, San Gemigniano, or of Aigues Mortes, gone astray in the tropics."

The cost of these walls was so tremendous that tradition has it that when the Duke of Alba once asked King Philip II. why he gazed across the Atlantic so steadfastly, he replied: "I am looking for the walls of Cartagena. They cost so much, they must be visible from here."

"Not only is it the most Old World town in the department of Bolivar but of the whole republic and perhaps of the whole continent of South America. . . . A breeze springs up from off the sea. Nature and man revive, and as it rustles in the palms a thin cloud of mist or spray seems to envelop all the city and its green gardens, letting them just appear beneath it with all their colors toned down and softened just as you catch the tone of caftan and burnoose under the fleecy texture of a diaphanous haik from Fez or Mequinez, as a rich Moor rides past in Africa.

"In the dark winding streets, where houses, over whose iron studded doors are cut the crests of conquerors, men stand before grated windows, as they do in Seville or in Cordoba, whispering the tale, so wearisome to any but the ear it is intended for; old as the world, but which will yet be fresh after a thousand years have passed away."

Of the tropical aspect of the city there is the following as an example: "Houses of the interior are few and far between, except upon the bank of the Sinu, where in some places they form a street on both sides of the stream. Nothing is more interesting than to ride through one of these straggling settlements; for several miles are cottages of canes and pitched with mud, supporting roofs either of reeds from the river banks or of banana leaves.

"No one is rich or poor. Fuel and clothes, the problems of the north, affect the people little. The earth yields crops with the minimum of cultivation, and fruit is plentiful. Outwardly there seems to be content, but no doubt envy, hatred, malice and the rest of the passions with which men plague themselves the world over are to be found there, as they were in the garden by the Tigris, when the world was young."

R. Cunninghame Graham on "Lucero."

A great deal of the drowsy, unreal atmosphere of the South Seas has entered into and permeated the atmosphere of the book, although the procession of Cunninghame Graham's virile northern rhythms across the page is anything but sleep inducing. But the Old Worldliness of the old city must pass; its advantages doom it to prosperity: "Nothing can stop the port of Cartagena from becoming eventually the chief emporium of trade upon the coast. Its unrivalled harbor, sheltered from every wind; its healthy climate, compared with those of other cities in like latitude; its nearness to the Panama Canal and the traditions it enshrines will, when the railway system of the republic is a little more advanced, make it the glory of the land."

The socialistic tendencies of the author crop out here and there. Throughout the volume he makes us aware of his dislike for formal religion and his contempt for the morality of Governments.

"Well have we played the part of helot to the republics of the Southern Hemisphere," he cries, "and taught them that all our criticism of their poor, futile revolutions, so sparing of the sacrifices of life, so careful to respect the honor of the home, has been but child's play to our own bloody sport."

To return to Shaw, who, while out walking with his mother, greeted Graham.

"Who is that?" she asked the playwright.

"Cunninghame Graham," he replied.

"Cunninghame Graham is one of your socialists," she said unbelieving. "That man is a gentleman."

Spain utilized the Indian

SPAIN'S DECLINING POWER IN SOUTH AMERICA: 1730-1800. By Bernard Moses. California: University of California Press.

The history of South America is very interesting at the point where Prescott left off. Bernard Moses has written a book which supplements "The Conquest of Peru." He is interested in showing us what makes the wheels go round. Hence his material is mostly expository. However, his narrative does not lag on this account and floats the more steadily in the rapids and eddies of history because it has so much ballast.

As Spain was the first colonial Power she had no precedents to guide her. The other nations of the world have profited by her experience. Spain had two points in her favor at the outset. Mr. Moses stresses the fact that the social organization of the Spaniard permitted the incorporation of the Indians as a working class. He contrasts this with the conditions in the English colonies. There the native had to disappear because there was no place for him.

Mr. Moses does not refer to another advantage which the Spaniard had—his religion—in any expository way. He seems to neglect this. However, his facts are very eloquent. The Catholic faith had many qualities which held the attention of the Indians. Her missionaries were more zealous than the Protestants of that generation. Throughout the continent the Jesuit fathers made converts and taught them the arts of civilization. They formed a State within a State. Their power frequently conflicted with that of the royal governors, but it protected the Indians from the greed of the grasping descendants of the Conquistadores. The Jesuits contributed stone to the edifice which did not match the rest of the building, but when it was taken out a gap was left which made it totter.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century revolt was in the air, and Mr. Moses has shown how the Spanish colonies were affected by new ideas. The American Revolution had a comparatively slight effect, although Miranda's expedition to Venezuela started from New York. The French Revolution had more important influence, and Mr. Moses does justice to this factor. Chateaubriand's noble savage had been anticipated by the epic of "Ercilla" and many Latin Americans responded to this appeal by giving their children such aboriginal names as Caupolican. This tendency to respect the old culture of the Araucanians and the Incas gave a picturesque coloring to the revolt of Spain's colonies, and ever since that period has modified the intellectual and cultural life of South America. Mr. Moses has handled his subject so carefully that his readers will hope that he continues to write on the later phases of Spanish America.

A melodrama of the South Seas

HELL'S HATCHES. By Lewis R. Freeman. Dodd, Mead & Co.

Since Melville's "Typee" the South Sea Islands have been the darlings of the writers of adventure stories. While they are the nearest approach to dream backgrounds or settings for Pandoralike existences they contain at the same time unsurpassed settings for adventure stories. Between Melville, who merely embroidered an actual happening, and Lewis Freeman's lurid "Hell's Hatches" there is more than the hiatus of time. One relied for his interest on the island's topography and the curious habits of its inhabitants; the other merely used the islands as a painted scene before which his puppets play out a conventional melodrama.

The man who tells the story is a painter and is introduced to us while he is waiting in his hotel room for an opportunity to shoot to kill an enemy whom he has invited to call. His hands are thrust deep in the pockets of his hunting jacket, and as he paces the floor impatiently he soliloquizes on how long he can abstain from his absinthe and about his ability to shoot pistols with unerring aim from his coat pockets.

The tale twists and knots about three characters, a South Sea beauty and two men who love her—an American naval officer who drank himself out of a glorious career into the obscurity of a South Sea beach, where he somehow still maintains the traditions of a gentleman; and a remarkably able cutthroat. The woman prefers the American, and when he perishes as a result of the other's contriving she avenges him. That is all—a confused melange of something which resembles life as much as a toot on a mouth organ resembles the playing of a symphony orchestra.

South America, buyer's market

STRAIGHT BUSINESS IN SOUTH AMERICA. By James H. Collins, D. Appleton & Co.

Reviewed by FRANK PLACHY, Jr.

James H. Collins has done American foreign trade a distinct service in his book "Straight Business in South America." There is no subject on which so much half-baked thought has been put out as the subject of the trade and other relations between the United States and the twenty republics of South and Central America. A ridiculously large percentage of the printed matter circulated in this country since 1914 concerning South America has been written by men who not only had never been to that continent, but whose connections precluded them from obtaining first hand information regarding the obstacles to smooth trading that have so persistently clogged the wheels of commerce up to the present time.

The present situation presents an ideal opportunity for Mr. Collins's book, because trade between this country and South America is slowing down to a point where it must soon come to a standstill unless effective measures for purchasing South America's raw materials can be rapidly worked out. It is clear to all having any connection with export trade that different methods must be used in the future from those that have been in effect since the war cut off European markets to South American buyers and closed to South American sellers the markets in which they formerly sold more than 60 per cent. of their raw materials. Mr. Collins aptly describes the buying and selling situation, so far as Americans are concerned, when he says that "the American business man who looks to Latin America for a market is different from the American business man who buys Latin America's products. The first is a romanticist and the second a hard-headed realist."

But the European sellers, particularly the Germans, were not romanticists when they practically controlled South American trade before the war. There was just as much hard-headedness in their selling as in their buying. The romanticist period in South America is at an end; hereafter price, terms, quality and promptness of delivery will determine whether American goods retain the markets they have had during the past six years or whether the trade will go back to Europe. It is going to be a fight under any circumstances, and observers like Mr. Collins who keep their feet on the ground and think in straight lines are rendering a service to this country's foreign trade that deserves adequate recognition.

The last six months have been a period of such extraordinary dislocation of the South American exchanges and adverse conditions have in general been so marked that there has been a shaking-out process going on among firms seeking to export goods to South America. The result has been that most of the fly-by-nights have quit, leaving the field to those houses which frankly recognize the difficulties of export trade during this period of price changes and depreciated exchange and which propose to remain for the fair weather expected when business again improves. It is the latter class of business houses, both those already in South American trade and those which intend getting in later, that the Collins book should interest.

There is a widespread inclination to regard South America as a unit, with the same general characteristics in all its parts. The truth is, of course, that there is practically as much difference in language, customs, climate, products and import requirements among the ten republics of South America as there is among the countries of Europe. And the distances and transportation difficulties are incomparably greater.

A careful reading of "Straight Business in South America" ought to be extremely helpful at this time to all Americans interested in doing business with that continent because Mr. Collins visited it just at the period when the war boom was coming to a close, raw material prices were giving evidence of the tremendous tumble they shortly afterward took and when selling methods were at the point of radical revision if business was to be continued. His book appears just as a new deal becomes necessary in export trade. The question is a bigger one than any scheme for providing export credits and the failure of the alleviative measures so far undertaken to bring any relief shows the magnitude of the entire matter.

South America's present plight is a natural and inevitable reflection of world depression. With the credit created by the advance of ten billion dollars to Europe during the war period, American exporters were able to take over practically the entire volume of raw materials formerly sold by South America to Europe. But with the end of those credits has come a reduced buying power and with reduced buying power raw materials, always the first to respond to economic factors, have declined to a point where their sale usually means a loss to the South American producer. This backing-up process has extended until the exchanges are entirely abnormal and the purchase of a dollar draft in any South American country can now only be effected by the payment of a high premium. This kills the opportunity to make a profit in the sale of goods, and when profits stop, business stops. American exporters are thus at the mercy of a world situation which only world improvement can remedy.

The business houses which realize that sellers' markets are gone for many years and that a buyers' market in South America means the hardest kind of European competition will enter the coming period with a reasonable chance for profit. Such houses will find in Mr. Collins's carefully written book a host of common sense observations more likely to prove of dollars and cents value than anything that has appeared in this field in a long time.

Latin-American literature viewed through periodicals

By GEORGE KENT.

The temperament of literary South America is reflected in its periodical literature, which is chameleon. Magazines come and go. The residents of the different capitals take for granted new periodicals, and sometimes remark cynically that first issues are best issues. Very few of these periodicals last long. They exist for a few months, perhaps for a year, and then they pass, and their editors for the remainder of their days mention the fact of their editorship with great eclat.

Many are mere ventures into the popular field, attempts to combine the virtues of *Police Gazette*, *Vie Parisienne* and the *American*. Others are roughly printed radical organs which veritably crackle in the newsdealers' kiosks. Then there are the organs of bands of fervent *litterateurs* who will not brook compromise with their artistic principles, even if it mean motor cars. These are thin leaflets containing much pretty verse and now and again a gem of pure lustre. They are effusions of youth, terribly sincere expressions of an age which has not yet learned to shrug as life goes by. Latin America is young just as Paris is young, and will always be. But they pass, these enchanting magazines, though from the reader's viewpoint they remain because there is always the same number of them on sale at the stands.

Some, however, have carried on. Such is *Nosotros*, or *Ourselves*, of Buenos Aires, a solid literary monthly of the *Mercure de France* type which attempts to be universal in scope. In one issue not long ago it contained a chapter of a history of San Domingo, an article dated Havana dealing with the younger poets of Cuba, a sketch of the life and works of Prosper Merimee, a translation of one of Verhaeren's longer poems, and a multitude of poems, among which was one addressed to "Kewpie."

A marked characteristic of these southern periodicals is their daring. Their editors print what they please and do not hesitate to tumble an old policy into the discard if a new policy seems to be an improvement. When Amado Nervo, the justly famous Mexican poet, died, Nosotros devoted an entire issue to selected poems of the poet and to articles discussing the different aspects of his work. *Cuba Contemporanea* in one issue printed fifty-three sonnets of obscure Spanish poets of the sixteenth century, and continued to do so for several succeeding issues. The editors explained that these poems represented an anthology of neglected poets of the Spanish classical period whose better work had been painstakingly collected and annotated by a certain Havana belles-lettrist. The issue that contained the first instalment of the anthology included a carefully written article on the Monroe Doctrine and the League of Nations, forty pages in length. Little wonder some of these magazines are short lived—they pay no attention to the public! Only the *Little Review* has been bold enough to devote an entire issue to one subject.

The literary periodicals are in the main of one type, appearing once a month, and resembling in appearance the *Atlantic Monthly* or the *Dial*. The tone of these magazines is severe; they are devoted to literature, philosophy and international affairs. They are far more international in scope and matter than any American magazine is to-day, with the possible exception of the *Dial*, which has recently inaugurated a policy of introducing foreign writers to its readers. Once in a great while a tale will be printed, but they are always hospitable to poetry and print in each such a quantity of poems as only a purely poetry magazine would have the temerity to print in this country.

A few are conservative and frown at departures from the old forms, but the great majority are liberal, and welcome the discussion and display of experiments in new mediums. *Juventud* of San Luis Potosi, Mexico, prints a long poem on the aeroplane, written in the following form:

And so through
The sky
In flight
Triumphal
The rumbling aeroplanes drum
With their potent, rhythmic motors,
Which in the imperial blue sounds—hum,
Hum,
Hum,
Hum.

Every large city in South America has at least one magazine which has withstood all vicissitudes. There are too many of them to be discussed here. The *Mercurio Peruano* of Lima, Peru, not long ago continued Don Quixote by bringing that gallant knight to "Yanqui-land." The new adventures of the sire of La Mancha continued for almost a year. *Cultura Venezolano*, of Caracas, *Pegaso* of Montevideo, *Revista Americana* of Rio de Janeiro deserve mention for the uniform excellence of their content.

No purely fiction magazines exist in South America, but most of the popular magazines print stories and fables, while the newspapers print serial stories from time to time. *La Nacion* of Buenos Aires publishes each Sunday an illustrated supplement which is literary in tone, containing articles on new literary developments, and a page devoted to reviews of new books and comment on events in the book world. *Plus Ultra* of the same city is the most ornate periodical under the Southern Cross, being modelled after *La Esfera* of Spain. For its cover each month this magazine has a repreduction in color of a painting of one of the masters and contains within its covers many similar reproductions, also in color. Its poetry, fiction, and articles are always illustrated. Sometimes the illustrations attain a high degree of excellence and very rarely do they sink to the stupid literalness of American illustration. A similar magazine exists in Rio de Janeiro, but the printing and style of it are not nearly so good, and its contents are mostly pirated.

For examples of Spanish American periodicals we are forced to turn again and again to Buenos Aires, which approaches closer than any other city of Latin America to being its literary capital. *Caras y Caretas* is the only periodical in South America which has a continent wide circulation of any importance. It earns more money for its owners than any other and is best liked by the populace. Notwithstanding its popularity it prints excellent poetry and fiction. It would be hard to say whether its popularity is due to the excellence of its contents or to the fact that it has reached a point where it can print what it chooses and retain its readers and advertisers nevertheless. It is packed with advertisements and hits off the Argentine spirit, and therefore the spirit of South America, better than any of its contemporaries.

Caras y Caretas, which translated means "Plain Faces and Funny Faces," is an illustrated weekly, about half the size of *Harper's*. Its cover is invariably an excellent political cartoon, often the work of Alvarez, a superb caricaturist who draws exclusively for this weekly. It presents a summary of the events of each week by means of photographs which perform the function of our rotagravure sections. Its treatment of politics is spirited and satirical, and always brief. It publishes a page of picture comics adapted to the country. Sometimes these appear in color. The characters in them are bywords and as well known in the streets of Buenos Aires as Mutt and Jeff and Silk Hat Harry to Americans. Each issue contains a tale which is excellently illustrated in color. This magazine combines the excellent qualities of the better American magazines with the tawdriness of Sunday supplements.

An entire school of magazines have followed in the wake of this lively periodical. *Chacaras e Qunitaes* of São Paulo has practically aped its name. An Argentine company which changed the form somewhat but retained the general features now operates successful magazines in every capital in South America. These contain news photographs, poetry, society events, and the hodge-podge of the Sunday magazine, and are known as *World of Brazil*, *World of Argentina*, &c.

In passing a word should be said for *Cervantes*, a magazine published in Madrid and devoted entirely to Spanish-American letters. Each issue is a survey of the current literature of the Spanish speaking countries of America. Its contributors write from every nation of the New World. A discussion of some phase of the literature of a Latin-American country is published each month, together with articles on the literary life and technical problems peculiar to this large group of writers.

Nowhere else in the world is periodical literature so intimate and so alive as it is in Latin America. It is a land where people hurl themselves into the ultra modern to forget the nearness of the backwoods, the green hell of the uncleared jungle which is virtually at the doorstep of every Latin-American nation. The proclaimed intent of scores of these magazines is to draw the attention of writers from the glitter of the continent to the deeper, if duller, life of their own countries.

It is a land where everybody writes poetry, the bustling housewife and the sleepy office boy. Don Quixote has ascended there from a classic to the rank of a folk tale and Sancho Panza's chestnuts crack the sides of the swarthy bootblacks in Valparaiso's streets to-day. In a land like this, where the poems of Amado Nervo, most subtle, restrained, and profound of poets, has a great sale, a great literature is to be expected. It is decreed by an economic law, for there is a great demand for the artistically beautiful in South America, and the writers of South America will sooner or later happen upon the vein of inspiration that will enable them to mine poems and romances of genuine value to keep this vast, attentive audience engrossed until industrialism has grown strong enough to do battle with art.